(c) As a follow up of the directions of the Supreme Court, all the State/UT Governments have been sent detailed guidelines on 26th December 1996 indicating the manner in which the directions of Supreme Court could be given effect to. A conference of States/UTs Labour Ministers was also convened on 22.1.97 to formulate an action plan for the implementation of the directions of Supreme Court on withdrawal and rehabilitation of working children. Based on these deliberations guidelines along with model child labour survey form for carrying out survey as per the directions of the Supreme Court have been sent to the State Governments/UTs. Guidelines also provide for simultaneous action for recovery of the compensation from offending employers.

Multi-purpose Counters in Post Offices

*269. SHRI SANAT MEHTA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the activities undertaken by multi-purpose counters in Post Offices:

(b) the number of multi-purpose counters opened in post offices in the country and particularly in Gujarat during the last two years;

(c) whether the Government propose to set up more multi purpose counters during 1997; and

(d) if so, the locations thereof State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) to (d) The PC based multipurpose counter machines in post office provide a range of counter services, both domestic and international, on a "single window" principle.

The services provided through the counter machines are:

Booking of :

(i) Speed Post Articles.

(ii) Registered Articles.

(iii) Parcels.

(iv) Money Orders.

(v) Value payable articles - letters and parcels.

- Acceptance of premia for Postal Life Insurance.

- Issue of Unclassified receipts.

- Receipt for collection of telephone revenue.

The Department has installed 1654 computer based counter machines in the country during the years 1994-95 and 1995-96 and out of these 86 counter machines have been installed in Gujarat.

The programme of computerising counter services with multi purpose counter machines is being continued in the Department's Annual Plan 1996-97 and it is proposed to be continued in the Annual Plan 1997-98 also. The number of multi purpose counter machines planned for installation in 1996-97 is 1500 and in 1997-98 is 1000.

Joint Plant Committee

*270. SHRI SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether Ministry has constituted and expert group to evaluate the present constitution and role and functions of Joint Plant Committee;

(b) if so, whether the group has submitted its report;

(c) if so, the details of suggestions made;

(d) whether the Government propose to make Iron and Steel Joint Plant Panel broad-based; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA : (a) and (b) Ministry of Steel had constituted a Committee on 10.1.1996 under the Chairmanship of Shri Moosa Raza, Former Secretary, Ministry of Steel to go into the question of redefining the organization and functions of the joint Plant Committee (JPC) in the liberalised economic scenario. The Committee has presented its report to the Government on 26.2.1997.

(c) to (e) The major recommendations of the Committee include broad basing of the JPC by including a representative each of the iron and steel plants both in the public and private sector which have a minimum installed capacity of 0.5 million tonnes per annum; co-opting five members at a time in JPC out of the various associations of iron and steel with each of the member association being represented by one member and including representatives from the Ministries of Railways, Surface Transport, Coal and Steel in the JPC.

As regards the functions of the JPC, the Committee recommends that the JPC should be a body to make suitable recommendation to the Government on matters relating to growth and development of steel industry; monitor , evaluate and recommend remedial measures to alleviate infrastructure bottlenecks coming in the way of development of iron and steel, identify areas of fiscal and other policies of different State Government affecting the industry and to make appropriate recommendations thereon; suggest market development strategies; act as an agency for collecting, collating and analysing the data

relating to all aspects of manufacturing and marketing of steel like production, consumption, marketing, sales, imports and exports, infrastructural facilities like rail transport, ports, coal, power, and trade information about the international market; service the information needs of the industry and the Govt. through continuous interaction with the various steel consumers/consumer associations and steel producers/associations and traders; act as the secretariat for the management of Steel Development Fund; receive and evaluate the annual tariff proposals from the industry by interacting with them and make suitable recommendations in this regard to Ministry of Steel, etc. The Committee has also made recommendations about the redefining of role and redesigning of activities of the Economic Research Unit of the JPC with a view to utilise the available human resource and expertise.

The recommendations made by the Committee are under consideration of the Government.

Running Cost of Diesel and Electric Engines

*271. SHRI B.L. SHANKAR : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the comparative per kilometre running cost of a diesel rail engine and electric rail engine at present;

(b) the length of total railway route electrified in the country during each of the last three years and upto December 31, 1996; and

(c) the length of railway route proposed to be electrified during the Ninth Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) The comparative cost of running per 1000 Gross Tonne Kilometre of Diesel and Electric traction on Broad Gauge for the year 1994-95 (latest available) is :

(Figs. in Rs)

	Passenger	Freight
Diesel	99.58	65.51
Electric	94.33	52.37

(b) Route Kilometres electrified during the last 3 year as under:

1993-94	505 Kms.
1994-95	473 Kms.
1995-96	609 Kms.

Total route kilometre electrified up to 31st December, 1996 is 13085.

(c) The Ninth Five Year Plan for the railways is under finalisation by the Planning Commission.

[Translation]

Foreign Tourists

*272. SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) the names of those countries from which the number of tourists have increased;

(b) the names of countries from where tourists visit the country in less number;

(c) whether any special steps have been taken to encourage the tourism with those countries from where tourists visit in less number; and

(d) if so the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) and (b) The tourist arrivals from each of the countries in the descending order of magnitude are given below:

(c) and (d) In view of limited resources available, overseas publicity and promotion is mainly confined to markets with high potential. However, efforts are being made to tap new and emerging markets by relocating some of the field officers of the Department of Tourism.

NATIONALITY	1994	1995	1996*	Precentage 1995/94	Change 1996/95
1	2	3	4	5	6
U.K.	300696	334827	364964	11.4	9.0
Bangladesh	282271	318474	322355	12.8	1.2
U.S.A.	176482	203343	224772	15.2	10.5
Sri Lanka	89009	114157	107722	28.3	-5.6
Germany	85352	89040	99593	4.3	11.9
Japan	63398	76042	95412	19.9	25.5
France	73088	82349	94581	12.7	14.9
Canada	56441	63821	72299	13.1	13.3